

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

The specification has been amended responsive to paragraph 2 of the Office Action, which is believed to be moot.

Applicants wish to thank Examiner Dehghan for the courtesy of an interview on October 22, 2007, at which time the outstanding Office Action was discussed. With respect to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, Applicants pointed out that the longitudinal side surfaces and terminal end surface of the glass sheet are shown in the figures and are, in any case, inherent in a belt shaped glass sheet. It is Applicants' understanding from the interview that a portion of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 based on the alleged lack of written description for this portion of the claims would be withdrawn. Concerning the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 with respect to the phrase "only the end portions," the word "only" has been deleted from the claims. The rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 is therefore believed to be moot.

The rejections of the claims as based upon the prior art were also discussed, but no agreement was reached regarding these rejections.

As has been extensively discussed in prior responses, according to a feature of the invention set forth in the claims, belt-shaped glass sheets, for example as used in a sidewall of an image display apparatus, have overlapping end portions with longitudinal side surfaces of the end portions overlaid on one another. The lap portions are thermally softened and pressed from both overlapped sides, thereby joining the lap portions together to a thickness of one belt-shaped glass sheet.

Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10-12, 14 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Ando in view of Kato et al. As was discussed during the interview, however, neither reference discloses joining end portions of belt-shaped glass sheets by locating the

end portions so that they overlap each other. For example, Figure 6 of Ando discloses bending an elongated bar around the forming elements 220a-220d, followed by butt welding the ends. The other embodiments of Figures 6 and 9 provide butt welding of each of the tubular members 218-219. In no case are overlapped end portions heated and pressed.

During the aforementioned interview, the Examiner explained that the “broadest reasonable interpretation” of the claims permits an interpretation whereby the “overlap” limitation would include, e.g., the butt welded arrangement of Figure 7. For example, in this case the tubular members 219 overlap one side surface of each of the tubular members 218. A similar overlapping is shown in Figure 3B of Kato. It is nonetheless respectfully submitted that the amended claims define over the prior art, even using the interpretation as set forth above.

First, it is respectfully noted that the claims recite that the end portions of the glass sheets “overlap each other.” This requires mutual overlapping of one sheet with the other, not merely one sheet overlapping the other. Thus, given the Examiner’s interpretation that the elements 219 of Figure 7 in Ando overlap a side surface of the elements 218, the elements 218 nonetheless do not overlap a side surface of the elements 219. Thus, the mutual overlapping recited in the claims is not satisfied by the interpretation adopted by the Examiner.

Second, Claims 1, 8 and 14 now recite that the overlap is such that longitudinal side surfaces of the end portions are “overlaid on one another.” The butting relationship disclosed in, e.g., Figure 7 of Ando, comprises the ends of the elements 219 being abutted on the edges of the elements 218. There are no longitudinal side surfaces overlaid on one another. For this reason as well, Claims 1, 8 and 14 define over this prior art.

Dependent Claims 2, 4 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Ando in view of Kato, and further in view of either Stroud or Cypher et al., which were

cited to teach features of these dependent claims. However, neither Stroud nor Cypher teaches the overlap recited in the claims, and so the claims define over any combination of these references.

Claims 5, 6, 11, 12 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Ando in view of Kato. Claims 5, 6, 11, 12 and 15 are apparatus claims which recite a heating mechanism which thermally softens the end portions of the belt-shaped glass sheet. They further recite a clamping mechanism which presses the lap portions of the thermally softened end portions from both sides in a thickness direction of the belt-shaped glass sheets, or is configured to do so. However, since neither Ando nor Kato discloses the end portions of sheets overlapping each other, they similarly fail to teach the clamping mechanism which presses such sheets. Moreover, as to the alleged obviousness of adapting the pressing mechanism of Kato to press overlapping glass sheets, without a teaching of the desirability of overlapping glass sheets, there would have been no motivation for such a modification. The apparatus claims therefore also define over this prior art.

Applicants are at this time submitting a Terminal Disclaimer for overcoming the double patenting rejection.

Applicants believe that the present application is in a condition for allowance and respectfully solicit an early notice of allowability.

Respectfully submitted,

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